

Václav Marhoul completes phase 5 of filming *The Painted Bird*

The fifth of a total of nine phases has just been completed in filming the adaptation the of worldwide bestseller by Jerzy Kosiński, **The Painted Bird** directed by **Václav Marhoul**. In late February and the first half of March, the film crew completed the depiction of all winter scenes at the Lipno reservoir and the village of Horská Kvilda in the Bohemian Forest.



*“For some of the scenes, we urgently needed a large frozen lake, and for others a lot of snow. Nonetheless, even three weeks before filming at Lake Lipno, and in the Bohemian Forest generally, it looked as if it would be spring and the weather would stay this way. For this reason, we started to plan and prepare for other possibilities how and where to shoot all the necessary winter scenes. Plan B was to prepare for filming in Estonia, and if even there everything failed to work out, then there would be Plan C, which was to film in Norway. But in the end, we were lucky. The weather truly met our expectations. One week before filming, there was a heavy snowfall and then severe frosts, which managed to create up to 20 cm of ice on Lipno”, adds **Václav Marhoul**.*

The interior scenes from this filming phase were completed in the village museum of Řepora, not far from the Prague suburb of Stodůlky. This section was the film debut of the young Slovak actress **Júlia Vidrnáková**, currently in her third year of studies at the theatre academy in Nitra town.



*“Júlia assumes the role of Labina. Her engagement came out of a competition that was held last year in Bratislava over two days just before Christmas. Normally, I select my actors directly, or from personal visits to specific theatre productions. This time, though, I had – exceptionally – to rely on something I really dislike: a public casting. A total of thirty-six potential actresses took part, and out of them, after learning in more detail about the intended scenes, twenty-four of them directly refused on the spot. Over the next days, another ten decided against it. So there were only two. And of them, I finally gave my preference to Júlia,” adds **Václav Marhoul**.*

Since mid-March, work has been fully underway on preparing the **sixth phase of filming**, planned for early April, again in the interiors of the Řepora village-museum as well as other selected locations near the Lipno reservoir. The next filming phases are planned for the whole of June and the start of July of this year.

Making of / Fotoalbum z natáčení:

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The Painted Bird

Trying to protect their child from the mass extermination of Jews, a Jewish couple sends their son to a relative in the countryside somewhere in Eastern Europe. However, the boy's aunt dies unexpectedly and the child is forced to set out on a lone journey through the wild and hostile world governed only by local rules, prejudices and superstitions. When the war ends, his fight for physical survival is replaced by a different kind of a fight. A battle he may not even be aware of, a battle with himself, a battle for his soul, his future...

Jerzy Kosiński (1933 Łódź – 1991 New York) drew inspiration for his first novel from his own experience and traumas – he was forced to hide in the Polish countryside during the war due to his Jewish background. Kosiński borrowed the title “The Painted Bird” from the rural environment. This expression refers to a custom once popular in the countryside – people used to catch birds and painted their feathers in striking colours. After this, they released the painted bird back into its original environment. However, the other birds would never accept the painted bird back. It would be perceived as an enemy, a foreign element in the flock, and was pecked to death. The main character in the novel feels like a painted bird, as he encounters fear, scorn and cruelty all the time and everywhere simply because he is different. The main character of the novel is a young boy, who himself is THE PAINTED BIRD.

Václav Marhoul

The Painted Bird is the third feature film for Václav Marhoul (1960, Praha) as the scriptwriter, producer and director. His previous film, *Mazaný Filip* (Smart Philip, 2003) and in particular *Tobruk* (2008) received numerous Czech and international awards. He was also involved in the production of films *Pražská pětka* (Prague Five, 1989) and *Kouř* (Smoke, 1990), and was the producer of the film *Postel* (Bed, 1998). Václav Marhoul graduated from FAMU, specialising in production, and worked successively for Czech Television, Short Film, and AB Barrandov Film Studios first as Assistant Producer and later from 1990 to 1997 as the General Director. In 1997, he established his own company Silver Screen s.r.o., focusing on the creation of feature films and organising theatre and visual arts events.

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